

Writing Responsive Proposals

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Proposal Advice

- The proposal process begins right now, not after the solicitation is released.
- Writing a winning a proposal is a long term process that involves:
 - Understanding the needs and interests of NASA
 - Interacting with the technical community
 - Help us write our subtopic descriptions by letting us know what you are capable of providing.
 - Find out how you can best be a benefit to NASA science and technical needs.
- Read the solicitation carefully
 - Do not assume it is the same as last year.
 - Reread it again, your competition did.
- Provide all of the required information, including Part 7 – Commercialization for Phase II proposals and the Commercial Metric Survey.
- Explain (early and concisely) how your effort will benefit NASA interests.
- You never finish writing a proposal, you just run out of time.

Proposal Advice (continued)

- Examine the selection criteria and directly address them up front. A reviewer should be able to lift sentences from your introduction that could go into their review.
- Proposals lose because of single sentences or paragraphs. What did you say or forget to say that could hurt you?
- If you have a particular strength claim it and ghost the weakness of the competition.
- You will never finish writing your proposal. You will, however, reach a time that you have to send it in.

Submitting Proposals – Common Mistakes



- Failing to read the instructions!
 - Your proposal may not even receive a technical review if it does not make it through the administrative screening
 - Adhere to the formatting requirements (page limits, fonts, margins,...)
 - Provide ALL of the required documents/Answer ALL of the questions
 - Register for all required certifications, websites, etc. (and do this as EARLY as possible!)
- Not being responsive to the technical area in the solicitation
 - Even if you meet all the administrative requirements, your proposal may not receive a full technical review if it is found to be non-responsive
 - Read carefully
 - Do your research to better understand the agency's technical needs
- Not being sufficiently innovative
 - Understand the current state-of-the-art and be able to demonstrate how your idea is novel
 - Conduct a literature search
 - Complete a comprehensive patent review
- Failing to set realistic expectations
 - SBIR/STTR awards are limited in both time and funding – make sure the plan you lay out is reasonable to complete given these constraints

SBIR/STTR Proposal Tips



- Review prior years solicitations at <http://sbir.nasa.gov/>
- Search and identify specific technical areas (subtopics) and lead center(s) of your interest
- Request subject matter expert contact information from respective field center program POCs
- E-mail/Call technical POCs and initiate dialogues
- Learn technology needs, priorities, and funding gaps
- Visit and brief NASA on your companies capabilities, if the opportunity presents itself (like today)
- **Please note** – once a solicitation is active, NASA centers, including JPL are not permitted to discuss the active solicitation